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ABSTRACT

The seven articles in this journal issue deal with various aspects of reading instruction. The articles discuss the following topics: (1) results of a study conducted to gain information helpful to reading specialists and school administrators in implementing new Wisconsin state reading requirements; (2) the use of creative, reading-based language arts projects with poor readers; (3) use of the PQRST (preview, question, read, summarize, and test) method in helping students study novels; (4) a method for helping students understand literary characters; (5) results of a survey to determine parents' level of confidence in their local elementary school's ability to successfully teach their children to read; (6) contributions and faults of the psycholinguistic approach to reading; and (7) methods to help teachers assess children's reading readiness. Regular journal features provide an update on research on language development and reading, suggestions for a puppetry activity and for ways parents can participate in their children's reading, and discussions of political issues in education and of conflicting philosophical positions regarding learning processes. (GT)

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Vol. 24, No. 4

Theme: Reading and the Language Arts

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WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION JOURNAL
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President's Message

Dear Friends of Reading:

This is my last message to you as president of WSRA. As of June 1, if not earlier, Mel Yanow will take over this lofty (one does feel like a bird at times) perch. At this time I'd like to look back over the year and share with you my concerns and suggestions.

First of all, I'd like to thank each one of you who did a little or a lot for WSRA. You are the backbone of the organization.

One concern would have to be the voter apathy of WSRA members. Only 212 people voted out of 1164! I'm sure Mel Yanow and the Nominations Committee would appreciate suggestions concerning how this could be improved--please tell them why you didn't vote.

Another concern that is of great importance is the need to restructure committees so that all members (if possible) are in close geographical proximity. It was very evident that with the costs of travel rising so rapidly many committees have a very tough time getting together. Please make an effort to attend meetings of your committee if you volunteer to be on it.

Some great things (and I can't mention them all) have happened this year such as: the Governor's proclamation and the billboards around the state proclaiming April 14-18 as Parents & Reading Week; the decision to have WSRA-sponsored fall reading conferences in the Northern half of the state starting this fall; the study of the Reading Specialists around the state which offers great insights into the strengths and problems of our people; the publishing of the final briefs in a series that started two years ago; the great increase in membership this year; the terrific 1980 Spring Conference at Oconomowoc; and finally and hopefully, the great impact WSRA has had on improving the reading education of children throughout Wisconsin through the

Journal and other activities.

I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to be your president. I now move on to a much needed rest.

Dave Gustafson
President 1979-80

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Introducing...

NEW JOURNAL EDITOR

As your new editor, I am sincerely looking forward to working with you to make the WSRA Journal the best state journal produced. Our journal has a fine reputation. Sue and her editorial staff must be congratulated on the excellent work they have done through the years.

As we enter the age of the 80's, I will strive to make the Journal a very valuable means of communication between reading educators in Wisconsin. A further goal will be to increase our readership while continuing to present practical and theoretical articles that meet the needs of our readers. We will continue to retain the regular features that you have enjoyed reading while adding new ones. One of our new features will be addressed to answering specific questions of our new readers. We will be spotlighting successful reading programs in the state as well.

I also hope to involve our readership more closely in submitting articles for the Journal. Many of you have good ideas to be shared. Please try your hand at submitting an article. The general themes for next year selected by our readership will be:

Vol 25, No 1 Theme: Essential Reading Skills
Manuscript Deadline: August 1, 1980

Vol 25, No 2 Theme: Vocabulary Development
Manuscript Deadline: November 1, 1980

Vol 25, No 3 Theme: What Every Parent Should Know About Reading
Manuscript Deadline: January 1, 1981

Vol 25, No 4 Theme: Evaluating Reading Programs
Manuscript Deadline: March 1, 1981

While each issue will center around a theme, interesting articles not related to the theme will be included.

Now for a little about my background. A native of Indiana, I received my Ph.D. from Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, specializing in reading. Prior to my doctoral work, I was an elementary classroom teacher for eleven years. This year I have been an assistant professor in Teacher Education at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and Director of its Reading and Study Skills Lab. Beginning in June, I will change jobs here at the University, joining the Northwest Teacher Corps Project as the Program Specialist. I will continue teaching some classes however.

I look forward to meeting many of you at state and local meetings. I also hope that you will share your concerns and ideas about the journal by writing to me in care of Teacher Education, University of Wisconsin-Superior, Superior, Wisconsin 54880. I am really excited about being your editor.

Cecilia E. Schrenker

THE TELEVISION CONNECTION

In response to a growing concern about the effects of television on children's reading skills and other areas of the curriculum from educators, Edgewood College has sponsored a three-day workshop for teachers since June, 1977. This year Edgewood College is co-sponsoring the workshop with the American Council for Better Broadcasts June 23 through June 26, 1980.

It is the aim of this fourth annual conference, "The Television Connection," to provide the teachers with the resources and practical materials needed to develop an individual approach for their classrooms. Thus, emphasis is put on understanding the underlying factors of television's effect on children to help them cope intelligently and critically with this major influence in their development.

Through this individual creative process, the teachers the last three years developed units which they could integrate into their present curriculum. A wide variety of ideas on how teachers could creatively teach about television was developed. Among these were:

1. Activities for children, about television, which centered on understanding programs and commercials.
2. A unit to help children become aware of how they watch television and why.
3. Games to aid children to realize and distinguish what is real and make believe in television programs.
4. A unit to study pro-social and anti-social behavior as seen on television as well as stereotyping of various characters.
5. A unit to develop an awareness of television as an art by studying the elements of television and broadcasting.
6. A unit to view television discriminately through the study of commercials.
7. A unit to aid parents in realizing the effects of television on their children educationally through parent surveys and programs for both parents and students.

8. Activities to teach children alternatives to television.

Participants in the conference may opt to attend the conference for the lectures only or may earn one graduate credit in education by developing a curricula. Persons interested in participating are invited to write or call Sister Helen Dailey, Coordinator of the Workshop or the Director of the Summer Session, Edgewood College, 855 Woodrow Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53711 (Telephone 608-257-4861).

Information provided by
Rosemary M. Lehman
Manager - Consultant
Madison, Wisconsin

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April 21, 1980

To The Editor:

On April 8, 1980, the Superintendent of the Kenosha Unified School District No. 1, sent the following recommendation to the Kenosha School Board:

> "It is recommended that if the State's revision of the proposed L.D. rule change for admission to L.D. is adopted that qualifying Remedial Reading students be placed in the L.D. program."

The rule change referred to is in the "Criteria For Determining the Existence of a Specific Learning Disability." (page 73, SS 121A.541, of the DPI Bulletin No. 8264, "Regulations Implementing P.L. 94-142"). Briefly, the criteria has been changed from the former deficit in two areas to a deficit in one area only. The new regulations specifically state: "...team finds that a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas: (would then qualify for L.D. placement)

(i) Oral expression;
(ii) Listening comprehension;
(iii) Written expression;
(iv) Basic reading skill;
(v) Reading comprehension;
(vi) Mathematics calculation; or
(vii) Mathematics reasoning."

The Superintendent's recommendations to the Kenosha School Board include this statement: "This recommendation has serious implications for the evantual phasing out of the remedial reading program--as presently constituted. It appears that the approval of the proposed rule change is imminent. This rule change will mandate placement of students with most reading deficits in the Learning Disabilities Program. The only excepted reading deficits will be those resulting from a lack of motivation. It is highly probably that no option will exist and students who qualify shall be placed in the Learning Disabilities program through the M-Team process."

As the implications of this interpretation of the new regulations have serious and far reaching effects on all school districts within our state, it is crucial for all WSRA members to be informed. When asked for their opinion regarding this interpretation, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), expressed their concern over the possibility that this could become a major issue in the state. Their concern is not only for maintaining good reading programs but also concern that the funds for providing 70% reimbursement for L.D. teachers will be severely strained. This will result in an over-enrollment of soft sign students with a reduction in services to EEN students. Because this matter strongly affects the L.D. teacher as well as the remedial reading teacher, we need a concerted action to ensure that students receive the best possible instruction based on their demonstrated needs, rather than requiring L.D. teachers to demonstrate expertise in an area where their certification and training have not prepared them.

A special School Board hearing is to be held on May 14, 1980. It is expected that an official position paper will be secured from the State department regarding the interpretation of the new regulations. This meeting will be open to the public. Anyone having pertinent information to be considered may present it at this meeting.

Virginia Hawkins
Reading Consultant K-12
Kenosha Unified Schools

The W.S.R.A. Studies Chapter 29 and Reading

by

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In 1977 Chapter 29 of the statutes of the State of Wisconsin was signed into law. This Chapter required each school district in the state of Wisconsin to employ a reading specialist with the beginning of the 1978-79 school term and in addition it spelled out some required duties of the reading specialist so employed. Such duties as "develop a reading curriculum K-12," "act as a resource person to classroom teachers," and "coordinate the reading curriculum" were some duties specifically mentioned in the law. In February 1978 the Wisconsin State Reading Association issued Informational Brief Number II which suggested some criteria for selecting a K-12 Reading Specialist to carry out the intent of the law, since it was clear that successful implementation depended on careful selection of professionals to do the reading job. This informational brief highlighted such things as credentials and technical knowledge the person should bring to the job as well as other job, interpersonal, and administrative skills needed to implement the intent of Chapter 29.

The requirements of the new state law and the informational brief of the Wisconsin State Reading Association both signaled a re-definition of the role of the reading specialist. Now the reading specialist was expected to do more coordinating,

administering and "resource-support" than before the passage of Chapter 29, and was expected to work more with staff and less with direct instruction in reading. The addition of responsibilities to the role of the reading specialist and the change in role prompted concern about the preparation provided for reading specialists to meet the demands of their new role. A major question raised was: "Do reading specialists feel adequately prepared to undertake the tasks and assume the roles described in the law and in the information brief?"

Other questions with regard to the role redefinition faced school administrators charged with hiring the reading specialist and assigning their duties under the law. "Are all duties and responsibilities of equal importance?" "Are there other roles for reading specialists in addition to those spelled out in the law?"

These questions and concerns caused Dr. Russ Burgett, then President of the Wisconsin State Reading Association, to suggest that a study be undertaken by the association to gain some information that might be helpful to reading specialists and school administrators in the implementation of Chapter 29 reading requirements in the state. The Committee on Research on Certification was charged with the task of coordinating such a study in the summer of 1978. Work began immediately and was continued when Dr. Dave Gustafson assumed leadership of the association.

Design of the Study

A survey instrument was designed by the Committee on Research on Certification to gather perceptions of the responsibilities of the reading professional from administrators and reading specialists. The final form of the instrument contained 36 items which the respondents were to check or rate on a 1-5 scale as being important (administrators) or the adequacy of training (reading specialists). One was lowest rating and five was highest. The survey instrument was divided into five parts. Part one asked for credential information with a "yes," "no" reaction to whether such things as holding Wisconsin Certificate 317, at least three years of successful teaching experience and membership in professional reading organizations (local, state, or national) were important. Parts two through four asked respondents to rate "job

skills," "interpersonal skills," and "administrative skills" on a 1-5 scale with one being low and five being high. Separate columns were provided for administrators and reading professionals. The administrator column instructions were, "rate the requirements of the role/responsibility in reading." The reading professional column instructions were "rate the adequacy of your training." The first four sections of the survey instrument were based heavily on criteria suggested in Informational Brief II (Wisconsin State Reading Association, Feb. 1978) for selecting a K-12 Reading Specialist.

A fifth section was added to the instrument by the committee to gather perceptions of importance (administrators) and adequacy of training (reading specialists) with regard to coordination skills. Respondents were asked to rate such items as coordination with (1) title I reading programs, (2) LD programs, (3) ED/LD programs, (4) Homebound programs, (5) EMR programs, (6) Gifted/talented programs, and (7) coordination/service on multi-disciplinary teams.

Two survey forms and one return envelope were mailed to every school administrator in the state of Wisconsin. Administrators were asked to fill out one form, have their reading professional do the same, and return both forms in the enclosed return envelope.

Results

Of the 433 school districts surveyed 253 administrators and 253 reading professionals replied (a total of 506 forms were returned). This is a return rate of 59 per cent. Results were tallied separately for administrators and for reading professionals.

Results for part one of the survey, which asked for credential information with "yes" indicating the item is perceived as important and "no" indicating the item is perceived as unimportant are summarized in Table I below.

TABLE I

Credential Information

	Adm.		Reading Prof	
	Y.	N.	Y.	N.
1. Wisconsin Certificate 317	149	42	203	15
2. At least 3 years successful teaching experience	187	13	213	3
3. Member of professional reading organizations	125	63	174	21

It appears that school administrators are less inclined to see credentialling as important than the reading professionals though this is not a clear cut result since not all respondents marked choices in part one. Administrators especially were likely to leave all or part of this section blank. With regard to survey item (3) on membership in professional reading organizations it is evident that state reading organizations are favored with 112 administrators and 160 reading professionals indicating that membership is important. Local membership was rated next, with 96 administrators and 145 reading professionals giving importance to membership in local reading organizations. Membership in reading organizations at the national level was indicated as being important by 63 administrators and 140 reading professionals.

In section two of the survey administrators and reading professionals were asked to rate a listing of job skills on a 1-5 scale with one being low and 5 being high. Directions differed slightly as administrators rated in response to the importance of the role/responsibility in reading and reading professionals rated the perceived adequacy of their training to perform the role/responsibility in reading. Table 2 displays the average ratings given by each group.

TABLE 2

Average Ratings for Job Skills

	Adm.	Reading Prof.
4. Knowledge of K-12 evaluation instruments and techniques	3.70	3.32
5. Ability to construct and interpret a reading assessment for determining reading program needs	3.67	3.09
6. Ability to construct and interpret a reading assessment for determining student needs	3.75	3.54
7. Working knowledge of curriculum development skills	3.61	3.24
8. Ability to evaluate and recommend educational materials K-12	3.51	3.41
9. Ability to provide leadership in the development and implementation of K-12 reading inservice and staff development programs	3.78	3.04
10. Knowledge of current K-12 reading methodology and significant educational practices	3.65	3.54

N = 253

It is evident that administrators perceive the job skills listed as generally rather important and that the reading professionals do not rate the adequacy of their training as high. In every case the average ratings given by administrators are higher than those given by the reading professionals. There were a number of unsolicited comments by the reading professionals included with the ratings of their training. Typical of these were comments like "nothing helps as much as experience!" and indications that they felt prepared to serve as reading teachers but not for the additional demands of Chapter 29. Several commented that they needed additional preparation in light of the new demands of Chapter 29.

Items relating to the interpersonal skills needed to implement the intent of Chapter 29 were included in part three of the survey. Again each group rated on a 1-5 scale with administrators rating importance of the interpersonal skills and reading professionals the adequacy of their training in the interpersonal skills. Average ratings received are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Average Ratings for Interpersonal Skills

	Adm.	Reading Prof.
11. Ability to communicate verbally and in writing	3.71	3.53
12. Initiative and persistence needed to accomplish meaningful goals	3.86	3.37
13. Ability to create unity and enthusiasm among the staff	3.79	3.17
14. Success in making learning interesting and challenging	3.65	3.34
15. Desire and commitment to reading	3.95	3.81
16. Open to considering divergent views	3.54	3.61
17. Encouragement of staff and administration to raise questions and express opinions	3.52	3.30
18. Treating staff members in an unbiased and impartial manner	3.71	3.39
19. Openness toward student or community suggestions	3.58	3.42
20. Ability to communicate with parents	3.67	3.38
21. Ability to adjust to changes in plans	3.59	3.35
22. Resiliency in being able to function under pressure	3.73	3.10
23. Willingness to try new approaches or methods	3.77	3.60
24. Enthusiasm for personal reading	3.51	3.64

N = 253

Comments received from the reading professionals in regard to the items in this section again pointed out that experience helps very much with the development of interpersonal skills and that in-service training by the Right-to-Read effort in Wisconsin had been very helpful. Right-to-Read was mentioned several times in this connection. Again, in general it is apparent from Table 3 that administrators tend to rate the importance of the interpersonal skills higher than the reading professionals rate the adequacy of their training in the interpersonal skills listed. There are, however, two exceptions to this observation. Skills relating to openness in considering divergent views and enthusiasm for personal reading are rated higher by the reading professionals. These are the only items in the entire study where the adequacy of training is rated higher than the importance attached to the item by administrators.

Part four of the survey contained five items relating to administrative skills. Here, too, administrators and reading professionals indicated their perceptions by rating the items on a 1-5 scale. The average ratings are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Average Ratings for Administrative Skills

	Adm.	Reading Prof
25. Understanding and working knowledge of Wisconsin Statutes 115, 120, and 29 as related to public education	3.39	2.71
26. Knowledge of budgeting procedures and sources	2.96	2.15
27. Ability to effectively supervise or evaluate the total reading program	3.72	2.85
28. Knowledge of, and willingness to carry out tasks within the framework of district line-staff organization	3.58	2.88
29. Capable of acquiring knowledge on procedures of writing proposals and implementing present or future state and federal programs	3.09	2.50

It can be seen in Table 4 that the pattern established in the earlier parts of the survey continues to hold, that is, administrators consistently rate the importance of the role responsibilities higher than the reading professionals rate the adequacy of their training to perform the role responsibilities spelled out and expected by their administrators and the requirements of the Chapter 29 reading legislation.

The final part of the survey instrument asked respondents to rate seven coordination skills. These results are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Average Ratings for Coordination Skills

	Adm.	Reading Prof.
30. Coordination with Title I reading programs	3.30	2.59
31. Coordination with LD programs	3.30	2.70
32. Coordination with ED/LD programs	3.22	2.50
33. Coordination with Homebound programs	3.21	1.96
34. Coordination with EMR programs	3.09	2.30
35. Corodination with gifted/ talented programs	3.11	2.27
36. Coordination/service on multi-disciplinary teams	3.18	2.64

N = 253

There were a few comments among the responses in this section such as "We don't have a gifted/ talented program" and some items were left blank. In general though the results in Table 5 show the discrepancy already noted between the ratings of administrators and reading professionals. In fact the ratings with regard to coordination skills appear to be more divergent than in any section of the survey.

In order to obtain an estimate of the significance of the differences in average ratings given by the administrators and reading professionals in this study a t-test on mean difference of ratings

was run. For this test it was assumed that the ratings were "scores" given by the raters to items on the survey and thus were continuous data. Two tests were run, one on parts two through four of the survey (items 4-29) and one on part five of the survey (items 30-36). The first test related to items dealing with skills mentioned rather specifically in the Wisconsin State Reading Association, Informational Brief II and the second test with items added to the survey by the Committee on Research on Certification.

The use of the t-test on mean difference technique indicated that the difference of the ratings given by administrators and reading professionals is very significant. The first test yielded a t value of 4.409 which is significant beyond the .01 level. The second test was even more dramatic as it yielded a t value of -7.498, also significant beyond the .01 level.

Discussion

It is obvious that there is a wide discrepancy between the perceptions of administrators, who view all items in the study of role responsibilities of the reading specialist in light of Chapter 29 as important, and the perceptions of the reading professionals of the adequacy of their training to perform these role responsibilities. The results of the survey indicate this rather clearly as do two illustrative comments received among the survey returns. One administrator commented, "I rate everything 5 but it is an honest rating because all are important." A reading professional commented, "I feel adequately trained as a reading teacher, but I was not prepared to do all this!"

It also seems apparent that the passage of Chapter 29 in Wisconsin has "changed the ball game" so to speak with regard to the role of the reading specialist. More and new demands are being placed on the reading professional.

More training and better training and preparation needs to be made available to reading professionals. This means that more in-service help should be provided to everyone charged with implementing the intent of Chapter 29. It means also that institutions preparing reading specialists and other teachers are going to have to examine and

up-grade their preparation programs to provide better services to professionals and better professionals.

The challenge, it seems, is to all facets of reading and reading organizations. This survey seems to have uncovered the following situation:

(1) We recognize the challenge to us all posed in Chapter 29.

(2) We know reading and Chapter 29 is very important.

(3) We are nervous about our preparation to do the job we are being asked to do.

In short, we see that we have a big, important job to do in Wisconsin.

NOTES

Members of the Committee on Research on Certification Committee during this study were: Robert McKeag, Oshkosh, Chair; Eunice Bethke, Madison; Jean Caudle, Oshkosh; Joan Clements, La Crosse; Pauline Witte, Waunakee; Phylis Foxgrover, Kaukauna; Louis Deners, Menominee; Art Schoeller, Milwaukee, and John Bricco, Green Bay.

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V.V. Garry, "Competencies that count among reading specialists," Journal of Reading, May, 1974.

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Creative Language Arts Projects: A Promising Approach for Poor Readers

by

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Expressive oral reading is an important objective of the elementary school reading curriculum. In fact, expressive oral reading, at least for some children, seems to be a prerequisite for the development of silent reading skills.

Recent studies (Samuels, 1979; Chomsky, 1978; Carbo, 1978; Allington, 1977) have pointed to the skill development benefits of giving students who lack oral reading fluency as many repeated practices with one selection as are necessary for them to read it fluently. The current thinking of many reading specialists is that students with oral reading problems profit more from prepared and rehearsed oral readings of one selection than they do from unprepared, one-shot readings of many different selections. Clearly, then, a need exists for instructional activities that motivate students to read with good expression and that take the drudgery and artificiality out of preparing and rehearsing reading material. The language arts curriculum in the elementary school is an excellent vehicle for providing non-expressive readers with the motivation, preparation and rehearsal

they need to master material for oral reading. Reading-based, language arts projects can motivate students with minor reading problems to try their hardest and to maintain their level of participation over the number of rehearsals that are necessary for them to experience reading as an expressive, communication process.

Some Sample Reading-Based Language Arts Projects

Poor oral readers can be actively involved in the process of comprehension as well as the process of fluent oral reading through producing simple audio-tapes, slide-tape programs, puppet plays, or other projects based on children's literature or functional reading materials. Reading becomes purposeful because the students are using reading selections to communicate messages to a specified audience, perhaps their peers.

The authors successfully used the following language arts projects with poor oral readers in elementary and middle schools. The projects require a minimum of technical expertise on the part of the teacher and the students. As projects progress, specific word identification and comprehension skills can be taught within the context of the project. Many specific skills, however, seem to be learned and mastered as a by-product of the rehearsals needed to complete a product about which the students can feel proud.

Slide Tape Programs

Students can be helped to create an audio-tape based on a story in their basal readers or their own language experience stories. Simple slides can be made to accompany the tape. For example, two second grade remedial readers spent many productive hours preparing a slide tape program about their favorite sports. The children dictated stories about their favorite sports to their reading teacher. After repeated practices reading their stories aloud the students tape-recorded them with inserted sound effects from a sound effects record. Next, they selected photographs from magazines which illustrated the main ideas of each story. These photographs were made into slides using a Kodak Ektagraphic Visualmaker Camera kit (Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, New York). Alternatives to this type of slide are contact paper slides from magazines or hand-drawn slides using Kodak Write-

On Slide Mounts. As a culminating activity the students played their audio tape while showing their slides to an interested audience of fellow students.

Students can prepare similar programs substituting filmstrips. Students prepare hand-drawn filmstrips on blank 35mm acetate rolls. An excellent reference book, Planning and Producing Audiovisual Materials (Kemp, 1975), provides illustrated, easy to follow step-by-step instructions for preparing these tapes, slides, and filmstrips as well as numerous other audiovisual materials.

Radio Plays

Students can be helped to produce a radio play, complete with sound effects, based on a selection from their basal readers, selections from a book of plays for children, or an original composition. For example, a play from the Scott, Foresman basal readers (Scott, Foresman Publishing Co., Glenview, Illinois) A Horse in Box Canyon is well suited to this activity. The play centers on two ranchers who, with the help of a helicopter, rescue a horse from Box Canyon. In the early stages of preparing for their radio show, students practice reading their parts until they can read them fluently. Additional readings are necessary to record their parts with coordinated background music and sound effects. (Sound effects records are available at most public libraries or instructional materials centers. Students can also create their own sound effects using simple household objects and their own creativity.) Students usually enjoy doing the six or seven "takes" necessary to produce a good quality radio show. Because they've had the opportunity and motivation to practice their reading, they enjoy listening to their final tape and hearing themselves reading with good expression and sounding very professional.

Puppet Shows

Students with their teacher's help can rewrite popular children's literature such as The Wizard of Oz, The Hobbit, or Sounder, in play form. Or children's plays can be used. After practicing their parts they can tape record their play, perhaps with sound effects and music to add realism. Students can then make simple hand puppets out of paper bags or construction paper for each of the characters in the play. During the performance, the students operate the hand puppets while the dialogue is

is presented as it was tape recorded. They don't need to refer to a script and manipulate the puppets at the same time. Thus, both actors and audience can enjoy a less anxious, more professional performance.

Opaque Projector Movies

Students can create an audio tape of readings from an appropriate reading selection such as Sendak's popular favorite, Chicken Soup with Rice. For this particular story, each student prepares an oral reading of his/her birthday month which corresponds to one of the twelve chapters in the book. Students then tape record their practiced months along with the background music; (a Vivaldi concerto in a major key would enhance this particular selection).

Next, they illustrate the story by making a series of sequential drawings on a long roll of shelf paper, which they pull through an opaque projector as they present "paper movies" for an interested audience.

Recording Song Lyrics

Another activity which provides for purposeful repeated readings involves listening to and rereading popular song lyrics. Students listen to the lyrics of a favorite song while they read a copy of the lyrics. They can practice reading the lyrics until they get intonation and stress patterns similar to those of the recording artists. They can then produce their own "recordings" on audio tape. Simple line drawings produced by the children on blank overhead transparencies can be used to illustrate the main ideas of the song as the audio tape is playing.

Reading Speeches

Another purposeful reading-related activity begins with students' listening to recordings of a speech such as Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" or Kennedy's "Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You". The students practice reading along with a short section of the tape until they can read a section of the speech out loud to their teacher with good expression. The students continue rehearsing sections until they can read the entire speech out loud with good expression.

Poetry

Teachers can work with students to help them select and prepare poems for dramatic reading. Students read through their poems with the teacher and mark appropriate stress, pitch and intonation patterns with slashes, underlining or other appropriate markings. Musical background provides a finishing touch, as well as support for good vocal melody. Poems such as "Birches" (Robert Frost) and "Spring" (Edward Estlin Cummings) lend themselves to this kind of reading, and either of these poems would be enhanced with a light Debussey musical selection.

Interviews

Students can read social studies texts and current events articles for the purpose of creating scenes depicting meetings between historically or currently prominent figures. Students with their teacher's help write dialogues which might occur between prominent figures. For example, interesting dialogue could result if Abraham Lincoln met Martin Luther King, Sigmund Freud met Gloria Steinem or Napoleon was a guest on the Johnny Carson show. Students would tape record their dialogues using a talk show format.

Another alternative might be to help students create audio tapes of interviews between a talk show host and favorite story characters or authors. The students might feel proud to hear their final tapes broadcast over the school public address system. These broadcasts might also encourage other students to read some of the stories their classmates have read and enjoyed.

Radio and Television Commercials

Students can produce radio and television commercials. They should be given time to examine commercials to learn how professionals advertise their products. Then, the students choose products which are commercially available or create their own products and write advertisements for them. Students practice and tape record their commercials, perhaps adding music or other audio effects to enhance their production.

Greeting Card Messages

Most students benefit from and enjoy reading greeting card messages. Frequently the tone or length of these messages, and the way they are printed help students read fluently and with good expression. Students enjoy rereading the messages to themselves as well as sharing them with classmates. Of course, they need to practice reading the messages so that their final reading sounds professional.

For all the activities described above taping the first oral reading as well as subsequent repeated readings is a helpful practice. The collection of tapes provides a good means of student evaluation. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, students are proud when they hear the progress they've made by the end of an activity. When tapes are sent home or parents are invited to a perfromance, they are generally impressed positively by hearing their children's reading progress.

Suggestions for Motivating Students

Students with reading problems, even minor problems, are often reluctant readers. The reading-related projects approach can be effective in motivating students to put their best efforts into improving their reading and can also be helpful in improving their school behavior. Obviously, the two travel together.

Perhaps the reason behind the success of the projects approach in motivating students and controlling their behavior lies in the sense of personal pride students develop as they observe the projects taking shape and feel the importance of their contributions. Most become proud of the project soon after they observe the likelihood that it will be completed and that it will be praiseworthy.

The following suggestions have been used successfully to maintain motivation throughout the progress of projects.

1. Identify the audience(s) to whom the project will be shown. Knowing the audience helps students anticipate their responsibility for creating a product they will be proud to show.
2. Arrange for teacher involvement in the project. Teachers manifest their interest and belief in the project when they read a part in a play,

contribute pictures for slides or in some other way participate actively in a project. Students feel a greater sense of responsibility for creating a good product when their teacher's reputation is also involved.

3. Specify time-lines for various stages of the project. The time-lines may have to be adjusted but students are more likely to stay on task when there are target dates to be met and those dates have been specified.

4. Keep charts for recording progress in accomplishing the various stages of project completion. A record of past accomplishment is a good spur to future accomplishment and is a tangible reward for work well done. If the record is kept on a chart constructed for that purpose, the teacher and the students can watch their project grow to completion.

5. Keep short, daily logs of accomplishment. A short student-teacher conference after each class for jotting down accomplishments, problems and work remaining to be done is a good procedure for keeping a record of the progress of a project and for evaluating students' daily work.

6. Send progress reports to the principal, parents and/or other people who are interested. These reports should be positive in tone and should highlight the students' accomplishments to date.

7. Encourage the principal, teachers, parents and other interested people to visit the project in progress. Knowing that others are sincerely interested in their work will enhance students' feelings of self-worth, pride and responsibility.

8. Include another adult in the project. The involvement of a counsellor, the school psychologist, a classroom teacher, a parent, the principal, the librarian, a senior citizen or some other available adult in the production of a project encourages students in their own roles and gives them the opportunity to meet people whom they may have stereotyped in very atypical roles. The involvement of other adults need not be large or time consuming.

9. Arrange for one-to-one conferences with the students about their work on the project and their feelings toward it. A student can become "lost" in a group project. Private conferences help teachers know how individuals are progressing as well as how the group is progressing.

Reading-based language arts projects provide motivation and practice for students who need instruction to improve their oral reading. Through these projects reading becomes the means to "think and talk about other things" (Moffett, 1968) rather than an end in itself. Reading has a purpose. As Smith and Barrett (1979) note, reading-related projects which result in tangible products encourage readers to view reading as "a launching pad to reflection, writing, talking, art work, and other personally satisfying pursuits."

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PQRST and Fiction: How to Study a Novel

by

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One of the most widely used techniques for teaching reading in the content areas has been the SQ3R method, or one of its variations, such as PQRST--preview, question, read, summarize and test. This method has been used almost exclusively with non-fiction material. We have found, however, that with modifications PQRST can be used in language arts to help students read fiction material more effectively. Actually, students are taught to develop their own "directed reading lesson."

PQRST and Fiction: The Method

The steps in using this method with fiction parallel those used with non-fiction material. A brief description of each follows.

Preview--Look at the story or book title, chapter titles, illustrations, and background information provided by the author, editor and teacher. Read the first two or three paragraphs of the first chapter.

Question--From the preview, ask two or three questions about the story. These may be factual, interpretive, or even creative questions. Also, by now, the reader should have an idea of the main characters, the setting (time and place), and a general idea or guess about the conflict.

Read--Read the story, or a chapter, looking for literary devices (plot, theme, style, etc. which have been previously explained) and noting the development of the action (exposition, complication, turning point, climax and resolution).

As you come to the end of the chapter, think about what you have read, and make a guess as to what you think MIGHT happen in the next chapter. Think of some questions you want answered in subsequent reading.

Summarize--As you finish each chapter, answer these three questions:

1) What happened? (factual)
2) What does this mean? Why did it happen? (interpretive)
3) If I interpreted this correctly, what does this show about the purpose of the novel? (creative)

Test--Answer the questions you asked before reading the chapter, or the questions of the teacher or your classmates.

Using the Method

At first, of course, students need quite a bit of direction in using this method. Sample beginning paragraphs from various novels or stories may be used, or the whole class may read the same novel or story, going through the five steps together. The classroom teacher may feel more comfortable having the reading specialist explain the method to the class, using an outline guidesheet with the students.

At Mukwonago High School, the reading specialist introduced the method to freshmen students. The steps in previewing were followed, and initial questions regarding main characters, setting and possible conflicts were discussed. Students formulated their own questions for the complete reading of the first chapter. Then the classroom teacher took over. Using a notebook, students were told to write a one paragraph summary after reading each chapter of the class novel. They then discussed how new information fit in with what they had already read. Some students were not able to read an entire chapter, and therefore summarized more frequently.

After summarizing, students wrote down a question and continued reading to answer it. At the end

of each chapter, they reviewed and shared questions. At times they were surprised to see that they all had the same question, and at other times were impressed when someone had a question no one else had. Some competition arose as students tried to be first to find answers. Class members read aloud, or broke into small groups to read and share information.

After three or four chapters, students realized that they had a handy guide for group discussion. Slower readers were delighted to find they were not forgetting, and did not have to go over what they had read. Some students did not write whole paragraphs, but limited themselves to writing key words or phrases on a sheet of paper which they folded and used as a book marker. They found that even these few words and phrases were enough to trigger memory responses.

Results

When the novel was finished students found it much easier to write their assigned reports. Notes were in order and handy for ready reference. No one forgot the novel. Overall about one-third of the 105 students involved sped ahead and asked to read another novel independently, for credit. Students were urged to use the preview section of PQRST to choose a second book. An unexpected result was that some of the students using this method found and read more than one extra book they had intended to read.

In addition to using PQRST for choosing and reading books, students were taught to use it with short stories. They looked at headings, pictures, and titles, trying to guess what the story was about. It became almost an unconscious effort as students started to use the system routinely.

The PQRST method used with fiction or non-fiction involves students in their reading. It helps reading become an active rather than a passive process. This leads to better understanding, better retention, and better motivation. Perhaps one of the best results comes when a student asks "When do we read another book?"

Helping Students Understand Character in Literature

by

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In literature, no matter whether it is fiction or non-fiction, understanding character development is an essential part of understanding what an author writes. In fact, much of the power of literature depends upon how well the author develops the characters.

In themselves, the characters developed in literature are not particularly important to the reader; but, because a reader becomes involved in what he reads and relates the activities of characters to his life, the characters developed in literature become important. Margaret Atwood (1972), a noted Canadian author, states that literature...

> as well as a creation to be enjoyed, can also be...a mirror. The reader looks at the mirror and sees not the writer but himself; and behind his own image in the foreground, a reflection of the world he lives in.

Atwood's point has implications for instruction in literature. If Atwood is right, and my personal experience with reading suggests that she is, then the reader's personal perspective helps the reader understand literary character and, at the same time, literary characters help readers understand themselves. When reading literature, readers do not forget their personal backgrounds. Probably, most readers interact with certain characters in

vicarious ways because they either like or dislike the character on a personal level. This interaction provides a fruitful format for instruction. Teachers can help their students come to understand literary characters better by fostering this interaction between their students and the characters their students read about.

The following "Application for Employment" is an example of a creative way to help students come to understand literary characters in a more personal way. At the same time, students are also developing other language arts skills. For example, students are coming into contact with job application forms. Certainly the completion of such forms represents a useful application of knowledge. The students, in completing the job application form must come to analyze the character's strengths and weaknesses and then apply this analysis by synthesizing the information into appropriate categories.

Most teachers would find this idea useful after their students have finished reading a piece of literature. If the job application form is to be used as an evaluative device, teachers are cautioned that many of the responses on the form will be creative. Answers might vary a great deal and yet be suitable. Still, the filling out of this form by students will permit the teacher an opportunity to see to what extent their students do understand the basic ideas in the literature. For example, if a high school class were reading A Tale of Two Cities, the teacher would probably want the students to create a mailing address in either Paris or London. If the students were reading Greek tragedy and were describing the character of Ajax, height and weight would be important because the character of Ajax is so physically strong. References and previous employment categories would allow the student to draw on the interactions between characters or to draw out ideas about the character's past.

A design for a job application form follows:

NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

POSITION APPLIED FOR	NAME	
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS	HOME PHONE	AGE
	MARRIED Yes No	NO. OF CHILDREN
	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF AN OFFENSE OTHER THAN A MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENSE? Yes___ No___ Details.	WERE YOU EVER DISMISSED OR FORCED TO RESIGN FROM ANY POSITION? Yes___ No___ Details.	

REFERENCES			
NAME	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION	YEARS KNOWN
1)___			
2)___			

EDUCATION

STARTED	LEFT	NAME AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL	SUBJECTS SPECIALIZED IN	GRADE COMPLETED

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER	STARTED	LEFT	POSITION AND DUTIES

(APPLICATION CONTINUED)

OTHER PERTINENT DATA

IN THE SPACE BELOW LIST OTHER INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO OUR ATTENTION

IN THE SPACE BELOW LIST REASONS WHY YOU WOULD BE A GOOD TEACHER

Having the student fill out a job application for teaching position for the literary character allows the students to work from a common background. All students will have ideas about good teaching and, as an interesting sidelight, the teacher will undoubtedly learn a great deal about students' perceptions of teaching.

The job application form could also be used at the beginning of reading. Goodman and Watson (1977) describe reading as "an active process in which readers use the strategies of sampling, predicting, confirming or rejecting, and integrating information." When used as a pre-reading activity, the job application form will allow the students opportunities to hypothesize about the character and to continually test these hypotheses as they gather new information about the character.

There are many ways that teachers can help their students come to better understand the characters from literature. Such understanding is important for students because it allows them to learn more about themselves. Coming to understand ourselves as we read is part of the attraction and the power of literature.

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Parents' Attitudes Toward Reading Instruction--Not So Negative After All

by

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Ever since the publication of Why Johnny Can't Read (Flesch, 1955), Americans have focused a watchful--if not skeptical--eye on the performance of the public schools in teaching our nation's youth to read. It is not uncommon to find media accounts describing the general decline of academic achievement, and specifically, the dismal state of reading instruction in America (e.g., "Why Johnny Still Can't Read," Flesch, 1979). The rising popularity of "Back to the Basics" movements and the trend toward the adoption of local and state-wide minimum competency standards are further manifestations of general interest and concern for the teaching of basic skills, especially reading. And even though comprehensive investigations of test scores and other measures of reading achievement (e.g., Farr, Fay, & Negley, 1978; Fisher, 1978; Harnishferger & Wiley, 1976; Tuinman, Rowls, & Farr, 1976; Wray, 1978) have shown a gradual improvement in reading achievement over the past fifty years, given the vociferousness of the critics' decrees of mass illiteracy, one would not be surprised if a sample of parents of elementary school children expressed negative attitudes toward their school's reading program.

The purpose of this survey, therefore, was to determine the level of confidence parents place in their local elementary school's ability to successfully teach their children to read. In other words, what are parents' perceptions of their local school's

reading program? Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the results showed parents' attitudes are not as negative as claims in the media would lead one to believe.

The Survey

The survey consisted of 12 forced-choice items (see Figure 1). The questions queried parents' attitudes toward several aspects of reading instruction: (a) the general state of reading achievement in the U.S.; (b) the quality of reading instruction today; (c) their own children's reading achievement; (d) the success of their neighborhood school's reading program; (e) parent involvement in helping children learn to read; (f) the educational goals of school reading programs; and (g) potential changes in practices and policies that might lead to improved overall reading achievement.

Surveys were distributed only to parents of currently enrolled elementary school pupils. Parents were categorized as either "nonteacher-parents" (parents who had no direct affiliation with education; i.e. they were not teachers, teacher aides, or school administrators) or "teacher-parents" (parents presently employed as elementary school teachers). The teacher-parent group was included in the survey to obtain a comparison of attitudes between those persons who have a direct knowledge of elementary school reading instruction (and a vested interest in it) and those who do not.

The sample of nonteacher-parents was drawn from the parents of a fourth-grade class in an elementary school in Appleton, Wisconsin. The teacher-parents were selected from the faculty of the same elementary school. Nineteen nonteacher-parent surveys (out of 40 distributed, 48%) and 14 teacher-parent surveys (out of 20 distributed, 70%) were returned.

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 displays the results of the survey. Numerals represent percentage of respondents for each item choice. The first numeral is percent of nonteacher-parent responses; the second numeral reports teacher-parent preferences. For convenience, nonteacher-parent results will be presented first followed by a discussion of teacher-parent opinion.

Figure 1.

1. How important do you think it is today for children to know how to read?
   100/100 very important 0/0 somewhat important 0/0 not important

2. As compared to when you learned to read, how well do you think children today are learning to read?
   22/38 better 39/54 just as well 39/8 not as well

3. Do you think that your children are reading as well as they are capable?
   50/50 yes 50/50 no

4. How qualified to teach reading do you think teachers are today?
   5/7 exceptionally qualified 95/71 adequately qualified 0/22 poorly qualified

5. How dedicated do you think teachers are? That is, how much concern do they have for their students, and how much effort do they put forth in their teaching?
   42/55 a great deal 58/45 some 0/0 not much

6. From what you know of your school's reading program, how successful is it in teaching children to read?
   28/23 very successful 72/77 moderately successful 0/0 not successful at all

7. How much responsibility should parents take in helping their children learn to read (helping with homework, reading to them, setting an example by reading themselves, etc.)?
   74/71 very much 26/29 some 0/0 none

8. How well does your school report to you? Do the progress reports you receive and/or conferences you attend provide you with enough information about your children's progress in reading?
   58/79 yes 42/21 no

9. How much of an impact does television watching have on children's success in learning to read?

6/18 TV watching helps children learn to read

17/36 TV watching has has no effect on learning to read

77/46 TV watching hinders children in learning to read

10. Do you think that reading to your children will help them learn to read?

89/100 yes

11/0 no

11. What should be the goal of schools today in terms of teaching children to read?

44/58 All children should be expected to read at some minimum level before they are permitted to leave school

56/42 Children should only be expected to achieve in reading at a level that is in accordance with their ability

12. Assuming that there is room for improvement in your school's reading program, which of the following do you think would help bring about this improvement? (Check only those items you would like to see happening).

68/86 formal reading instruction through, at least, Grade 8

32/64 better trained teachers of reading

53/64 more individualization (i.e. design the reading program for individuals)

37/0 return to letter grades at all levels

32/29 allow more time in school for recreational reading

37/29 more dedicated teachers

32/36 better reading materials

58/50 more "holding children back" when they are not succeeding

42/21 earlier instruction in reading (i.e. in kindergarten and/or pre-school)

21/43 have teachers read more to children in school

47/21 stricter discipline

16/21 put less pressure on children to succeed

37/36 more time spent teaching reading (i.e. less time on science, phy. ed., etc.)

32/43 more emphasis on phonics

Nonteacher-Parent Attitudes

Results revealed a unanimous feeling that knowing how to read remains very important today (question 1). When asked how well children's general reading achievement today compares to that of the past (question 2), parents demonstrated no majority opinion: 22% responded "better", 39% "just as well", and 39% "not as well". When asked how successful their children's school reading program was (question 6), parents responded more positively: 28% indicated "very successful" and 72% "moderately successful"; no parent felt that it was "not successful at all." But when specifically asked if their own children were reading up to their potential (question 3), half of the nonteacher-parents surveyed indicated that their children were not. So although only a minority (39%) of nonteacher-parents felt that literacy in general was declining, and all parents felt that their own children's school had a reasonably successful reading program, fully half of the parents felt that their children were not reading up to their capabilities.

When asked about the qualifications and dedication level of today's teachers of reading (questions 4 and 5), nonteacher-parents indicated that all teachers were at least adequately qualified and possessed "some" or "a great deal" of dedication for their work. Parents were less satisfied (42% not pleased) with their school's means of reporting to them concerning their children's progress in reading (question 8). The majority of parents did agree, however, that they should take some responsibility in helping their children learn to read (question 7; 74% "very much" responsibility), and 89% felt that reading to their children would assist them in learning to read (question 10).

There was also much consistency concerning television viewing and learning to read (question 9): 77% of nonteacher-parents felt that "TV watching hinders children in learning to read." Opinion was

split on the issue of what the goal of schools should be relative to reading achievement (question 11). About half of the parents (44%) believed that some form of minimum competency standard is appropriate for promotion, whereas the balance (56%) felt that children should only be expected to achieve up to their individual abilities.

The changes parents would like to see most (question 12; 50% or more), relative to their school's reading program were: (a) formal reading instruction through Grade 8; (b) more individualization of reading programs; and (c) more retention when children are not succeeding. Significant percentages of parents also felt that stricter discipline (47%), earlier instruction in reading (42%), and a return to letter grades (39%) would also improve elementary reading instruction.

Teacher-Parent Attitudes

Teacher-parent attitudes were fairly consistent with nonteacher-parents on a number of issues. Both groups agreed that: (a) knowing how to read is very important (question 1); (b) teachers are reasonably dedicated (question 5); (c) their school's reading program was fairly successful (question 6); and (d) parents must assume much responsibility in helping their children learn to read (questions 7 and 10).

Teacher-parents reacted more positively than nonteacher-parents to question 2: children's general state of literacy. Only 8% felt that children today were reading less well than in the past. Interestingly, however, like nonteacher-parents, half of the teacher-parents felt that their children were not reading up to potential. So again, a sort of paradox is evident: The majority of parents agree that schools are reasonably successful in teaching children to read, while at the same time admit that their own children are not reading up to their potential.

Teacher-parent opinion differed from that of nonteacher-parents in several other areas: Teacher-parents were generally more satisfied with the progress reports they received (question 8), and they expressed a less negative view of the impact television has on children's reading achievement (question 9). These differences in opinion are not particularly surprising when one considers that

teachers are more familiar with progress reports and most likely have used or been exposed to quality educational television programs. Consequently, one would expect them to possess more favorable attitudes in these areas.

It is interesting to note, however, that teacher-parents were more critical of their own profession's qualifications to teach reading (question 4). While no nonteacher-parents felt that today's teachers were "poorly qualified" to teach reading, more than one-fifth (22%) of teacher-parents expressed this opinion. This self-criticism also appeared in response to question 12. While only 32% of nonteacher-parents indicated that "better trained teachers of reading" would help improve school reading instruction, about two-thirds (64%) of teacher-parents felt that elementary school teachers are in need of additional training. It is also interesting to note that while nonteacher-parents slightly favored the goal of only expecting children to read up to their potential (question 11, 56%), the majority of teacher-parents (58%) indicated that some minimal level of performance should be expected before promoting children. So it appears that teacher-parents not only are more critical of their colleagues' qualifications, but also express a greater preference for minimum competency standards--attitudes one might have expected from nonteacher-parents instead.

With regard to the item 12 checklist, there was agreement between teacher- and nonteacher-parents on several issues. Both groups felt that formal reading instruction through at least Grade 8 is warranted, more individualization of reading instruction is appropriate, and that "more 'holding children back' when they are not succeeding" should occur. Contrary to nonteacher opinion, the majority of teacher-parents felt that better training in reading instruction of teachers is needed. Areas of disagreement concerned grading and discipline; while one-third of nonteacher-parents were in favor of returning to letter grades, no teacher-parents favored this change; and while about half of nonteacher-parents (47%) felt that stricter discipline would improve reading achievement, only one-fifth (21%) of the teachers polled indicated that this would improve instruction.

Conclusions and Implications

In summary, the results of the survey revealed that both teacher and non-teacher parents expressed similar attitudes on most issues. The consensus was that the majority of children are learning to read as well as or better than children in the past. But when asked about their own children, parents were more critical; both groups felt that half of their sons and daughters were not reading up to their potential. And although teacher and nonteacher-parent attitudes differed in several specific areas (e.g. teacher qualifications, TV viewing, grading, reporting), the overall message from both groups was similar: elementary schools' performance in teaching children to read is neither dismal nor extraordinarily good; some aspects of the instructional program are strong, others are in need of improvement and/or change.

Given the fact that the sample of parents surveyed was small and restricted to only one community, it would be inadvisable to generalize the results of the present study beyond the sample population. Nevertheless, the results do suggest that parents' attitudes toward public schools' performance in reading education may not be as negative as media reports indicate. And even though parents of elementary school children as a group may not be fully satisified with the job schools are doing, it would be dishonest to declare that there is widespread dissatisfaction concerning reading instruction in America.

Certainly, additional survey research is warranted to determine if this opinion is representative of parental attitudes on a larger scale. And if indeed results of further studies are concurrent with this survey, then the following conclusions must be supported. First, parents as a group are capable of formulating independent, intelligent opinions concerning the performance of their local public schools--views that even run contrary to highly visible public opinion. This occurrence is somewhat surprising and refreshing when one considers the commonly accepted, almost dogmatic "belief" that America's schools are failing to even minimally educate this nation's youth.

Second, research evidence like the present survey should serve as a signal to reading educators

that their performance in fact has been adequate. For too long those persons involved with reading education have permitted the barrage of criticisms of public education to go unchallenged. Rather than demanding that the claims of declining achievement be substantiated, most reading professionals have merely cowered and remained silent. Although there certainly remains room for improvement, the American public must be informed that more children are learning to read better than ever before.

And finally, the present study should act as a reminder to include parents when evaluating educational programs. Parents are very perceptive in assessing their children's behavior, yet educators seldom use this valuable source of information. Parents should be included in planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programs. And as the present survey suggests, the only reliable way to identify and measure their attitudes is to ask them--the obvious, but infrequent, course of action.

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What's Wrong About the Psycholinguistic Approach?

by

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The psycholinguistic approach to beginning reading instruction has received intensive publicity since its advent over ten years ago. In 1969 Goodman and Fleming wrote Psycholinguistics and the Teaching of Reading. Between that date and the publication of Smith's Psycholinguistics and Reading, in 1973, certain accurate and worthwhile conclusions about beginning reading instruction have emerged from the writings of the advocates of the psycholinguistic approach (PA).

Contributions of the Psycholinguistic Approach

One of these axioms was that the mistakes that children make in their oral reading should be evaluated differently than has traditionally been the case. Children substitute reasonable, grammatically-acceptable synonyms for printed words they read aloud in sentences. Such a reading is not significantly in error, the advocates of the PA have properly noted. They have rightly interpreted such a reading as a purposeful attempt by the child to utilize all three cue systems that are available for the recognition of the meaning of written material. These are the graphic, syntactic, and semantic systems. That is, the young child uses letters, the sentence context, and his knowledge of word meanings to recognize the meaning of written material.

The traditional evaluations of children's oral reading did not take these matters into consideration. By charging all substitutions in oral reading as errors the conventional judgments of oral reading made some serious mistakes. One of these was an insensitivity to the fact that substitutions in oral reading

can be examples of children's expectations that reading material makes sense. Children anticipate that reading material will sound like the language with which they are familiar.

Another of the mistakes of the conventional evaluation of oral reading was an apparent unwillingness to accept the fact that children rely greatly upon context cues when extracting meaning from printed material. They make intelligent guesses about the identity of words in sentences based on what the sentence implies these words would be. These guesses often suffice for the extraction of meaning from print--at least for the present needs of a reader.

The advocates of the PA have pointed out that the traditional view of children's oral reading was wrong in both of these ways. The PA thus has deepened teachers' sensibilities as to what an oral reading error by a beginning reader truly is, and what an error means in regard to his or her comprehension of written sentences. Accordingly, we have become more tolerant and understanding of the oral reading mistakes of children. We have come to judge some of them not as errors, but instead as satisfactory miscues. In turn, word perfect oral reading as the standard for oral reading now is held in less favor among teachers of beginning reading. Fewer negative comments are made about children who read aloud in ways that indicate that they are making intelligent guesses about words, based on their uses of syntactic and semantic cues offered by sentence contexts. We are more likely at present to approve of such reading. We have been reminded by the PA that learning cannot take place without such errors. A reasonable amount of such trial and error in reading is to be encouraged.

The Faults of the Psycholinguistic Approach

These useful contributions from the PA to the practice of beginning reading instruction obviously have merit. This positive side of the PA should not blind us to its faults, however. Unfortunately, a balanced critical judgment of both the weaknesses and strengths of the PA so far has not been available. For example, in forty-five issues of a journal of the International Reading Association, The Reading Teacher, those from 1972 to 1977, one can find at least twenty-eight articles that were wholly complimentary to the PA. Nowhere in these issues of this periodical can one discover an article that presents the disadvantages of the PA.

This lack of negative criticism in The Reading Teacher about the PA would suggest that it has no shortcomings. To the contrary, however, an examination of the PA indicates that it has a number of weakensses.

The advocates of the PA commonly contend that beginning reading "is not primarily a visual process" (Melvin, 1979). Beginning reading "instruction should move away...from letters, sound-symbol associations and word recognition," it is said (Garman, 1977). The teaching of phonics in beginning reading is held to be "a potential and powerful method of interfering in the process of learning to read" (Smith, 1973). Others agree that "the usual phonics instruction is likely to do more harm than good" (Lee and Rubin, 1979).

The proponents of the PA also dismiss the need for the analysis of individual words as a means of comprehending reading materials. It is said that "Psychology shows that our working memory is so constrained that we could not possibly comprehend speech or writing if we analyzed individual words" (Smith and Goodman, 1971). As Hittleman (1978) explains, "meaning is not derived from a synthesis of identified and understood words". To him, "Individual words are recognized only after the reader understands the message". Thus, a reader "can only 'recognize' the constituent words [in a written passage] when the meaning of the entire statement is known."

These ideas appear to stem from the conception that learning to read is much like learning to speak and listen. Beginning readers use the same process to gain meaning here as they do when they listen to oral language, the advocates of the PA insist. The cycle of sampling, predicting, testing, and confirming in listening also dominates children's getting of meaning through reading. Accordingly, supporters of the PA hold that the beginning reader should be taught to explore passages of written material rather than to learn to plod through individual words. There is, thus, no need to teach a hierarchy of reading skills in a systematic fashion in the PA. Indeed, to this effect it is evident that "sequences of reading skills may by their very nature be counterproductive to learning to read" (Hoskisson, 1975).

The major difficulty that one has in accepting these tenets of the PA is that they are not supported

by the empirical evidence on how young children acquire reading abilities. A survey of the reviews of this research brings one to a conclusion different from that reached by the advocates of the PA. These research data (Anderson, 1977; Carnine and Silbert, 1979; Chall, 1976 and 1977; Desberg and Berdiansky, 1970; Dykstra, 1974; Gibson and Levin, 1975; Kavanagh and Mattingly, 1972; LaBerge and Samuels, 1977; Murray and Pikulski, 1975; Pflaum-Conner, 1978; Reber and Scarborough, 1977; Resnick and Weaver, 1978; Wallach and Wallach, 1976; Weaver, 1978) reveal that it is beginning readers' inability to deal with individual words that has the greatest negative effect on their comprehension of written materials. It is not a lack of guessing or sampling strategies for whole passages that prevents the development of early reading abilities, the research findings suggest. To the contrary, one can find no research evidence that confirms the notion that beginning readers must be taught to explore reading materials as wholes, or that this teaching should be done in place of instruction in how to recognize words.

It has been discovered that any needed use of context cues by beginning readers will emerge spontaneously in their reading performance. At the same time, it is clear that the longer beginning readers stay in the phase of reading instruction that emphasizes the use of context cues (rather than letter cues) the poorer the readers they will be at the end of the first grade (Biemiller, 1970).

The belief of the advocates of the PA that "All a teacher can do (for the beginning reader) is provide the raw material, the written word and its 'name'" (Smith, 1971) has also been demonstrated as false. Several studies (Anderson, 1977; Bennett, 1976; Guthrie, 1977) concur with the conclusion reached by Berliner and Rosenshine that "the classroom behavior of a successful teacher is characterized by direct instruction" (1977).

The charge by the advocates of the PA that phonics teaching impedes beginning reading achievement also seems to have no foundation. It has been consistently pointed out in the empirical research that an early, intensive, systematic and direct teaching of phonics is superior for the development of beginning reading skills than is the kind of methodology the PA recommends.

The contention by the PA that none of the individual words in a sentence needs to be identified for the beginning reader to come to the meaning of this sequence of words also finds no corroboration from the research literature. After a careful analysis of this PA proposition, Massaro (1975) concludes that "we are not aware of any support for the notion that a phrase can be recognized before any of its component words". This hypothesis of the PA also violates the common experience most readers have had as comprehenders of written language.

Finally, the assertion by the PA that young children's learning to read and their learning to listen/speak are identical processes is open to negative criticism. Since an unlimited linguistic environment is provided the child when he or she learns to speak, this condition would also be appropriate when the child learns to read, the PA proposes. We know, however, that the restrictions put upon vocabulary, syntax, and semantic/concept load in young children's reading materials have served useful functions in beginning reading instruction. Many differences have been discovered between written materials and how children learn to read them; and speech and how it is mastered (Groff, 1976). The extent and variety of these differences suggest that it is not proper to assume that children best learn to read in the same manner that they learn to talk.

Conclusions

Some of the claims and pronouncements about the PA toward which one can make reasonable objections have been presented here. So far, the positive support for the PA in the literature on the teaching of reading has been far greater than the negative criticism of its claims. It is important, therefore, that we continue to make critical analyses of the PA. We need at present to decide what parts of the PA merit our approval and acceptance, and which of its ideas pose dangers to the orderly process of beginning reading instruction. Only through such examinations of the PA will we be sure to conserve what is worthy in our traditional reading instruction practices. These analyses of the PA will also reveal the potentialities for improved reading instruction that it may offer.

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When Is A Child Ready To Read?

by

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"Why weren't your children all reading in at least the first grade reader?" snapped the second grade teacher.

"When is my child going to get a reading book?" the anxious parent asked at the conference.

"Oh no, it's March--some of my kids aren't reading!" groaned a nervous first grade teacher.

"Hey teacher, are we going to learn to read today?" quizzed the excited kindergartener.

"Learning to read" is an expectation our society has for children entering primary schools. The teacher's problem is not with the expectation, but with the pressures which result when some children don't appear to fulfill it as promptly as others. At this point, the teacher should ask, "In what ways is the child ready to read?" and "In what ways is the child not ready to read?" Instructional efforts should be directed toward helping the child learn in a positive, developmental manner. When there are attempts to impose a formal reading program upon a child who is not ready, the results are usually disappointing for teacher, parent and child.

A group of primary level teachers in Madison, Wisconsin, were interested in resolving some of the issues that revolve around beginning reading. Joining together as the East Area Reading Rediness Committee in 1977, regular classroom teachers, learning disability and Title I teachers, speech and language clinicians, psychologists and principals began to struggle with beliefs about reading,

definitions of terms, and solutions to the identified problems. As a result we have written a position statement, "The Child: Ready to Read?" which supports the idea that learning to read is a continual developmental process. A part of this statement is:

> A child's beginning reading experiences are important. There is nothing about first grade which makes this level necessarily the best time to begin formal reading instruction. As teachers, we need to consider long range attitudes and behavior toward reading. Children need to be ready in many ways before they can achieve long lasting and widely applicable learning. Imposing a formal reading program upon a child before he/she is ready may foster frustration and damage that child's attitude toward reading. (East Area Reading Leadership Team, 1978.)

The Reading Readiness Committee has identified a set of cue questions to help teachers assess the ways in which children exhibit reading readiness. The cue questions focus on the child's learning styles, cognitive and language development, and social and physical environment. A readiness assessment kit provides more specific testing and observational techniques keyed to the cue questions. A description of these two components follows.

Cue Questions

Cue questions are designed to stimulate divergent thinking. They are phrased so that they cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. Cue questions help teachers focus upon an individual child's strengths and learning needs. Each question should elicit more questions and more valuable information that contributes to sound decision making concerning a child's specific reading problems and program.

In "The Child: Ready to Read?" cue questions are organized into three categories: the learning process, cognitive and language processes, and background information. The categories are presented in a format that allows teachers to write comments directly opposite each cue question. This worksheet format also allows for ease in skimming. The teacher can select those questions which need

further investigation and also spot the areas in which the child exhibits strengths. Observations, interviews, formal and informal test results can be quickly recorded. Examples from the three categories are listed below:

1.0 The Learning Process

1.6 How does the child indicate auditory discrimination?

1.10 What is the child's relationship to various classroom environments?

2.0 Cognitive and Language Processes

2.1b In what ways does the child demonstrate being aware of similarities and differences among objects? (Classification)

2.2h How is the child beginning to demonstrate the ability to predict and test outcomes? (Cause and effect, hypothesizing)

3.0 Background Information

3.2a What is the child's relationship to siblings?

3.6e What is motivating and reinforcing to the child?

(East Area Reading Leadership Team, 1978.)

Readiness Assessment Kit

When the cue questions were distributed to teachers in 1978, there was an enthusiastic response. However, teachers soon indicated a need for immediate accessibility to assessment examples and procedures. In response to this request, the Reading Readiness Committee developed the "Readiness Assessment" kit (1979). This bright blue box contains a folder of back-up materials for each cue question. If, for example, a teacher wishes to assess "What listening skills does the child have?" he may pull the corresponding folder from the kit. He would find further cue questions which give additional definition to the basic cue question. Also included are samples of auditory discrimination assessments, a listening data collection sheet, a list of human resources and a bibliography of related readings. Each cue question folder contains a similar collection of

assessment materials, color-coded for easy access. In many cases the teacher will find references to materials with which he or she is already familiar. The purpose of the kit is not to provide original material, but to organize and make readily available the strategies the teacher needs. The kit can be continually updated by the addition of new materials either by the committee or by the individual teacher.

Summary

"The Child: Ready to Read" cue questions and the "Readiness Assessment" kit were developed by a group of interested teachers to help themselves and their colleagues better understand and work with children who are learning to read. In preparing these materials we have learned a great deal about the reading process and the effects of language development and environmental factors on learning to read. We have broadened our thinking and our options for instruction. We have learned to appreciate the benefits of cooperative efforts among classroom teachers and support staff. Teachers are currently using the cue questions to assess the learning needs of individual children. The questions also form a basis for discussions with other professional staff about these children. The cue questions and assessment strategies are useful for multidisciplinary team reports and are used in some parent conferences and in planning with Title I teachers. We believe the experience of asking divergent questions related to reading has helped us and our colleagues to clarify our own views on the reading process. We are convinced that learning to read is a continual developmental process in which the rate and the manner of learning are unique to each child.

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RESEARCH UPDATE:
Language Development and Reading

by

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Traditional views of readability have held that as the material gets longer and more complex, it becomes more difficult to process (Klare 1974-75). Although this may, in part, be true, recent discoveries in the field of linguistics have raised questions about this. According to Pikulski (1976)

> The field of linguistics has also pointed out the importance of the complexity of the sentence as an important determiner of comprehension. There appears to be a fairly general agreement that material written in syntactical form which matches the syntactical form of the reader is easiest to understand. There have even been studies which suggest that attempting to simplify the syntax of materials to be read by older, linguistically more mature students can actually adversely affect their comprehension. (378)

The study by Pearson (1974-75) showed conclusively that when asked to choose between simple and complex sentences, children in grades three and four chose complexity. They recalled information in more complex forms, and chose complex forms even when they had really read simple forms.

In order to understand the issues raised by these studies it is necessary first to examine the development of language and cognitive abilities of children as they progress through adolescence. This is necessary to determine what are the syntactic and semantic structures which characterize this develop-

ment, and to describe some of the measures which could be used to determine developmental stages through adolescence.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The study of the development of language and cognition in children has concentrated on the period from 0-5 years. The remarkable process of acquiring a vocabulary and the syntactic and semantic rules to govern its use by the age of five has overshadowed the later development of concepts and the linguistic structures that define them. According to McNeill (1966) "Grammatical speech does not begin before one-and-one-half years of age; yet as far as we can tell, the basic process is completed by three-and-one-half years." Slobin (1971) says that by four to five years of age the child has succeeded in "mastering the exceedingly complex structure of his native language. Menyuk (1963) concludes "all the basic structures used by adults to generate their sentences can be found in the grammar of nursery school children."

The next five years, the years from five to ten have received somewhat less study, both for the development of language (C. Chomsky, 1969) and for the acquisition of the parallel language system of reading (F. Smith, 1974).

Almost every system of language or cognitive development treats the next period, from 10 to 18, in the same category as the adult. The Piagetian youth moves from concrete to formal operations at eleven years of age. According to C. Chomsky the youth develops adult language competence at about the same time. M.A.K. Halliday (1973, 1975) places the achievement of adult sociolinguistic development at this same period. All of these researchers take into account a developmental process whereby 11 is only an approximate age. According to Ingram (1975) it may take as long as 12 years to acquire many rule based general rules of grammar, especially the transformational rules involved in complex sentences. C. Chomsky (1971) reports that children's ability to comprehend certain structures varies widely, depending on their cognitive development and language experience. Menyuk (1977) claims that "some structures of this type are not comprehended by adults in the community. Coincidentally, it has been found that almost 50 percent of American adults never reach 'adolescence' in the Piagetian cognitive sense." (34)

Anyone who has taught high school students and analyzed their writing can attest to the fact that their linguistic abilities are not fully developed. Studies done on students' writing and language (Loban, 1976) demonstrate that children have not completed their linguistic growth by age 10, or even by age 18. Palermo and Molfese (1972) review the literature on language acquisition after five years of age and conclude "the 5 year old is far from having the equivalent of an adult native speaker's facility with the language." (409) They went on to delineate important transitional stages at ages 5-7 and 12-14 years of age, when rapid growth occurs.

MEASURES OF SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT IN LANGUAGE

Traditional views of linguistic development have concentrated on the acquisition of vocabulary and the syntactic structures that organize words into discourse. The studies of LaBrant (1933) and McCarthy (1954) concentrated on clause length, sentence length and vocabulary, the same factors used by most readability formulas. LaBrant developed the first index of language complexity, dividing number of subordinate clauses by the total number of clauses used in the students' writing samples. Her index does not consider the use of infinitives, participle, gerunds, prepositional phrases, or appositives, which are now considered measures of complexity.

That vocabulary continues to develop throughout a lifetime needs little demonstration. The development of syntactic structures past age five is more interesting. One of the first major studies of syntactic and semantic development was by Watt (1945), who traced the development of vocabulary, and what he called "free expressions". Watt developed a series of tests designed to measure growth in the ability to perceive space-time relations, suppositions, hypotheses, connectives such as "although" and "because," and other constructions in continuous speech. In testing the "although" connective students were asked to complete ten sentences such as "Tom took my ball from me although..." Children showed a steady year to year growth from age 8 to 15 on this measure. In addition, Watt developed measures of complexity in writing which contain a wealth of material for the prospective language researcher. Watt identified ten stages of language development at the infant, junior, and senior level. The two

stages at the senior level are: the ability to relate particular ideas to more general ideas using connectives such as "although" and the ability to frame hypotheses and draw conclusions, using subordinate clauses of concession such as "provided that", and "nevertheless." Watt went on to outline twenty different uses for language ranging from drawing attention to a young child's needs, to recapitulating the steps of a logically presented argument. Watt provided a framework to measure language development in school age children which, despite many anachronisms, could be used today. In addition he provided practical advice for teachers which is still valid. He concluded: "linguistic development, like many other forms of true growth, is a gradual affair, and we must not try to make our children run before they can walk."

Loban (1963, 1977) conducted a series of studies using oral and written samples from a group of students as they progressed from grades K-12. The results of his study show a continual increase in sentence length, clause length and sentence complexity.

Although he was not able to identify definite stages of language development in his study, Loban did notice a plateau in grades 7, 8, and 9 followed by rapid growth in the last few years of high school. This seems to contradict the findings of Palermo and Molfese (1972). Loban found that the ability to use hypothetical thinking, passive construction, and adverbial clauses differed between high and low ability language users regardless of age. He concluded by identifying a chart of approximate sequences in language development from age 5 to 12:

Ages 5 & 6	Correct use of pronouns and tenses of verbs. Increased complexity, especially conditional and causal. Average words per communication unit 7 oral.
Ages 6 & 7	Increasing complexity using adjectival clauses and if-conditional clauses. Average words - 7.5 oral.
Ages 7 & 8	Increased use of relative pronouns in adjectival clauses. If, when and because conditional clauses. Use of gerund phrase as object of verb. Average words, 7.6 oral, 6-7 written.

Ages 8, 9, 10	Relate particular concepts to general ideas using "meanwhile, unless, even if, although." Begin to use present participle, perfect participle, and gerund as object of preposition. Average words, 9 oral, 8 written.
Ages 10, 11, 12	Frame hypotheses and envision consequences using "provided that, nevertheless, in spite of, unless." Increased use of auxiliary verbs, "might, could, should." Increased adverbial clauses, adjective clauses, participles, gerunds, adverbial infinitive, and compound predicates. Improved coordination of main clauses. Average words, 9.5 oral, 9 written.

The most thorough inventory of linguistic development for school age children is the Speech and Language Assessment Tasks Inventory developed by Kellman (1976). This battery of tests was designed to measure developmental sequences of language abilities through middle school age. It includes measures for comprehension, including syntax, semantics, and paralinguistics, production, and language content, including temporal concepts, spatial relations and classification. One of the most interesting techniques used in the inventory is the use of humor, or the ability to "get" jokes as a way of assessing language development. It makes use of existing tests such as the Miller-Yoder Test of Grammatical Syntax. Flood and Kellman (1976) have begun the process of validating the inventory items and providing statistical data. Clearly the development of an inventory such as this will be an important step in determining the effect of language development on reading.

Peltz (1973-74) studied the effects of repatterning reading material to match the linguistic patterns used by the students. Using an instrument designed to measure the frequency of 51 different transformations in students' writing, the author analyzed the individual T-units of both students and textbook authors. He then rewrote 8 passages in a history textbook to match the frequency of various transformations in the students' writing. His findings were somewhat confusing. When measured by a cloze test scored by exact word, or by acceptable synonym, the comprehension test scores were

significantly (.05) higher for the repatterned passages. However, when measured by multiple choice tests, there was no significant difference. Clearly, it would be extremely difficult to repattern all reading material to match each student's linguistic structures. Yet this study does provide insight into why certain reading materials may be difficult for students to read.

CONCLUSION

Language development of school age children is very difficult to measure. Most indices such as Loban and Watt involve analyses of students' oral or written language samples. A few direct tests of linguistic development have been written but there is need for a great deal more research in this area. Most of these indices measure syntactic development. As cognitive theory develops it will become possible to look at the development of semantic processes. The work of Kintsch (1974), Rummelhart (1976), and Anderson (1976) may eventually lead to a theoretical basis for language comprehension which will be capable of being tested on a developmental basis. Often the research for language comprehension is done among college freshmen, with little regard for how such abilities are acquired. Only when such research takes into account the development of language comprehension will it be possible to understand the effect of language development on reading comprehension in school age children.

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Resources for Teachers

by

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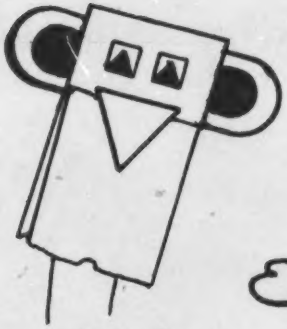
The classroom teacher plays an important role in providing learning experiences that are rich, deep and lasting. An exposure to many different selections of literature can stimulate the desire to read.

One way a teacher could help students develop an understanding of the printed word is through the use of puppets. Their use goes beyond the acting out of the story read. Puppets can be used to develop vocabulary, to glean the students' comprehension of a piece of literature, and stimulate the imagination.

This can be accomplished through dialogue between teacher and puppets which allows for the expression of puppet characters' thoughts and also allows puppet characters to communicate with other puppet characters.

Stick puppets, finger puppets, hand puppets, the humanette--a large cardboard cut out in the shape of a person, animal, plant or machine, and masks are among the numerous types of puppets that are appropriate for a language arts activity.

Be daring! Try a puppet activity using one of the following puppet styles.



Paper Bag
Hand Puppet

Hand Puppet

Stick Puppet

Humanette Puppet

Finger Puppet

D. P. I. Reading Newsline:
The Politics of Education

by

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The shortcomings of public education are frequently placed at the doorstep of the local school district. Although the schools exercise considerable authority, it is delegated governmental authority, which is the ultimate power and authority over education. This power rests with the state government.

Not only is the state responsible for public education, but the state plays a substantial role in the financing of education and in formulating educational policy. Education is big business. In fact, the major portion of every tax dollar goes into the support of education. In Wisconsin about two-thirds of the state budget is for education. Consequently, the governor, through the state legislative body, potentially has considerable power in educational policy-making.

Since the 1960's, education has become engulfed in unprecedented political conflict. George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, took a strong stand against bussing and desegragation. In Wisconsin, the recent governors are aware of the intricacies of the politics of education and have used the knowledge to formulate educational policy at the state level. Wisconsin Governor Patrick J. Lucey played a dominate role in setting educational policy. During his term, he was involved with the enactment of the 13 Standards for Education, more rigid certification standards, an educational DOA and legislative audit, Wisconsin University Systems merger, educational cost controls at 9 1/2%, a proposal for state assessment and negative school aids as well as competence-based education. During his tenure as governor, there were other political issues such as collective bargaining, unionism and teacher strikes.

Governor Lucey wanted teacher accountability. He wanted all students to be competent in the basic skills, particularly reading, and therefore supported the mandated position of a K-12 reading specialist in every Wisconsin school district. Since this bill (referred to as Chapter 29) had come before the legislature previously and had been defeated, in the Spring of 1977 it was attached to the state budget bill to ensure its passage. In July 1977, Governor Lucey signed the budget bill and Chapter 29 became law. Wisconsin State Statute 118.015 thus created has changed most of our professional lives.

What is the status of 118.015? The majority of school districts are in compliance with the intent of the law. Presently there are less than two dozen school districts that are in non-compliance with the law regarding the employment of the K-12 district reading specialist.

Most of the school districts have board approved reading goals, have completed the district needs assessment and are in the process of completing the annual evaluation. The k-12 component is being met in several different ways. Some schools are encompassing the reading into the content areas, others are adding secondary reading courses to the curriculum, while a number of districts have written adopter/adapter proposals submitted under Title IV-C. The most popular National Diffusion Network programs include the Vocational Reading Power (VRP), Mastering Learning, Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI), Reading English Rotation (RER), Woodrow Wilson Junior High School Program, and Project R-3. The funding for these reading projects amounts to more than $150,000. Presently, with the spiraling costs of education and declining enrollments, every source of funding must be considered.

The K-12 developmental reading law is a good law. It has great potential for meeting the reading competencies of all students. With Wisconsin governors playing a more active role in educational policy-making, it is essential that educators become more active in the political domain. We cannot afford to perpetuate the myth that education and politics do not mix. This is an important election year and it is our responsibility to become actively involved in campaign issues.

Administering Reading Programs:

by

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Many critics of today's schools are demanding action to raise achievement scores. Since it is natural to strive to improve, this in itself is not an unwarranted expectation, however, the definition of language arts underlying many of these pressures and the resulting practices warrant careful consideration. Many of the educational activists for increased test scores define reading, language and spelling as that which is measured on an achievement test divided into subject categories. Unfortunately, public pressure based on this definition frequently turns an integrated language arts program into isolated skill instruction. Administrators and teachers then face a contradiction between the child development theory/humanistic philosophy espoused in system goal statements and the non-humanistic teaching practices so efficient in meeting the demands for higher test scores. This is not to fault public involvement in education, but rather to suggest that if the public understood the contradiction they would not make demands that are inconsistent with, and sometimes contrary to, previously agreed upon goals.

Whose job is it to educate the public? Many interested and knowledgeable persons such as teachers, principals, supervisors, school board members, university personnel, officers of education associations, and officers of professional organizations could provide the needed clarification. As citizens, these persons can have input into policy making decisions via the open forum of school board meetings. As educational leaders, they can avail themselves of every opportunity to clarify goals and to indicate teaching methods, materials and evaluation procedures consistent with the philosophy of education underlying the agreed upon policy. It is of utmost importance

that everyone involved understand the wastefulness of demands that pull in opposite directions. For example, if the goal is personal freedom and growth, then the teaching-learning process should provide opportunities for such development. Students should be given the opportunity not only to select answers but also to decide on meaningful questions. On the other hand, if the goal is to insure proper test-taking behavior, then it follows that the curriculum materials and teaching methods should condition the students to give the "right" answers. Most parents want their children to become fully functioning adults. Most citizens recognize that the nation's "tomorrow" depends on the attitudes, abilities and skills developed by today's students. It is imperative that local educators unite to help the general public and the policy makers understand that a clearly stated philosophy is essential if program proposals and/or revisions are to be relevant and consistent. Components of such a philosophical statement would include the view of man, the nature of knowledge, the nature of learning, goals and/or values, related teaching methods, materials and evaluation procedures.

One position a school system might endorse is that man is an organism capable of rational thought. Knowledge would be defined as historical truths reasoned by intellectuals throughout time, teaching materials would be the "great books," and evaluation would be in terms of the emulation of great intellectuals in exercising faculties/reason.

A contrast to the historical-cumulative-wisdom view of knowledge is the view that knowledge is private insight and truth is a matter of personal interpretation. This philosophical position would view man as purposeful and creative, a fully-functioning person interacting with his psychological environment. Teaching would promote and enrich the interactive learning process as students and teachers cooperatively identify problems and seek solutions. Evaluation in terms of change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and commitments would reside primarily in the learner.

Another possible position would view human beings as organisms subject to conditioning. Such schools would select "knowledge" necessary for the survival of the culture, identify overt behaviors that show evidence of such learning (behavior change), plan

environments that reinforce desired behaviors and then evaluate in terms of measurable changes in the overt behavior. Teaching materials consistent with this position would include teaching machines, programmed texts, etc.

The descriptions of the above positions are minimal and readers are encouraged to review additional information on these and other philosophical foundations of education as presented by Bigge (1976). Although philosophy and psychology may appear far removed from the daily duties of busy administrators, the time and effort spent delineating goals and clarifying philosophy may well prove to be time and resources saved. If program adoptions, additions and/or modifications are evaluated for consistency with agreed upon goals, then it is quite possible that students will be spared wasteful bandwagons, panaceas, and fads.

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PARENTS' SPOT:
Reading Begins at Home

by

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The Parent's Spot feature for this issue has been divided into two sections. First, the WSRA's first annual Parents and Reading Week will be summarized. Secondly, home ideas for summer reading will be presented.

Part I

Parents and Reading Week

"Reading Begins at Home" was the theme selected for Wisconsin's first annual Parents and Reading Week. An official proclamation was signed by Governor Lee Dreyfus at a public signing ceremony on March 31, 1980.* Many attempts were made to reach Wisconsin parents in order to create an interest in reading to and with their children. Major effort was devoted to the following:

1. Thirty eye-catching billboards declaring "Reading Begins at Home" dotted Wisconsin's highways during the month of April. Several regional outdoor advertising firms generously donated space and labor. Related artwork, printing and mailing expenses were supported by contributions from private industry and a number of local reading councils.
2. The Department of Public Instruction cooperated by mailing a packet of informational materials, developed by the WSRA, to each reading specialist and district administrator in our state. Reading specialists were asked to duplicate two informational handouts from the packet and distribute them to parents in

*Copies of the 1980 official proclamation are available for WSRA members. The document could serve as a model in the event that city-wide Parents and Reading campaigns are proclaimed in the future to support the WSRA's efforts.

the respective districts. Each WSRA member received a copy of that packet.

3. Radio spots and newspaper articles, designed to inform and instruct parents, were distributed statewide.

4. The 1980 WSRA Spring Conference included a stimulating Parents and Reading sectional presented by Patricia Koppmann of the San Diego, California Unified School District and Ellen Ryan of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Free materials were distributed to conference participants.

The first Parents and Reading week is over; however, our work has just begun. Next year the committee will strive to improve and expand the campaign.

Part II

Home Ideas for Summer Reading Activities

Schools will soon be dismissing children for summer vacation. Does vacation time mean that all learning comes to a standstill for a few weeks? On the contary! Summer days present excellent opportunities for growth. What are some things parents can do to ensure that reading ability continues to grow and even blossom during the summer?

The activities suggested here do not ask parents to teach their children. Rather, parents are encouraged to create opportunities for children to discover or rediscover the world of reading. Enjoyable, leisure-time reading projects will help children develop their own existing potential as learners. Many of the suggestions can involve the entire family and even be included as part of camping trips, outdoor picnics or simply turn long, hot summer afternoons into fun events.

SINGING WITH CHILDREN: Singing songs with children creates an opportunity for learning words and sentence patterns that will help them in independent reading. Sing old favorites, sing along with records the child owns or borrows from the library, and learn a few new songs together. Sometimes it is necessary to discuss words or phrases that the child fails to understand. Try composing new lyrics for a song you all know well. You may wish to begin creating new words for an easy pattern like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"; then try a

more difficult selection such as "Michael Finnegan". Many song books can be found at the public library. One of my own children's favorite titles has been "The Fireside Book of Children's Songs by Marie Winn, Simon and Schuster, 1966.

TALKING WITH CHILDREN Personal, meaningful conversations give children a chance to hear the language of his/her adult model and to respond to that meaningful language message with words and sentences that convey thoughts. Building skill in oral language will help prepare the child for responding to written language tasks. Many reading experts feel that success in reading is related to the child's ability to use and understand oral language. What should you talk about? As starters, try these:

a) Plan an evening family picnic and discuss "children's menu" choices.
b) Read a humorous poem and talk about what made the poem so enjoyable.
c) Review safety rules to be followed at the swimming pool.
d) Talk about the joys and problems found in the family garden.
e) Discuss a trip to the zoo, park or playground.

READING WITH CHILDREN Set aside a few minutes for family members to read independently. Supply library books, comics, personally owned books, newspapers and magazines that will interest the whole family. Children need to see their parents reading for pleasure!

READING TO CHILDREN Plan to read something to the child every day. Balance the reading to include picture books, folktales, fairytales, fables and other types of read-aloud literature. Poetry, songs and news articles will add diversity to the reading sessions. Three publications available through the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801, will serve as guides to parents in helping their children select books:

a) Adventuring with Books: A Booklist for Pre-K - Grade 8, by Patricia Cianciolo
b) Your Reading: A Booklist for Junior High Students, by Jery L. Walker
c) Books for You: A Booklist for Senior High Students, by Kenneth L. Donelson

VISITING THE PUBLIC LIBRARY/BOOKMOBILE WITH CHILDREN Check with the local librarian to find out what special activities have been planned for children. (If a story-hour is offered, parents can use the time for a relaxed session of personal reading.) Help children select several types of materials to use at home:

a) Easy books to be read alone to improve reading skills
b) Books to be read by parents to enrich reading skills
c) Records of favorite stories, poetry and songs
d) Tape-book combinations

Be certain that the "book bag" contains someting to stimulate the interest of each adult family member too.

BUILDING A PERSONAL LIBRARY WITH CHILDREN Owning books helps develop a positive attitude toward reading. Establish or continue to build a personal library for the child. An in-expensive library can be constructed with a sturdy cardboard box covered with brightly cclored adhesive-backed paper or fabric. Stock the child's library with:

a) Paper-back books purchased at the grocery store, bookstore, or department store
b) Paper-back books and book-record combinations the child receives from one of the numerous children's book clubs
c) Books the child buys at yard or garage sales
d) Books received as gifts
e) Books pruchased as souvenirs on family vacations

COOKING WITH CHILDREN Cooking and baking give the child a chance to discover that reading is a useful skill. Along with learning new vocabulary and practicing comprehension skills, the child will benefit from the positive individual attention received from the parent. What techniques and ideas can make the cooking experiences worthwhile?

a) Plan to use simple recipes. It may be possible to locate children's cookbooks at the library, bookstore or toy store
b) Re-write more complex recipes on tablet paper or even on a grocery bag using sim-

pler terms and deleting abbreviations (Tblsp., etc.)

c) Discuss words or procedures that may confuse the child (combine, cream the ingredients, add gradually, sift, etc.)

d) Use recipes to reinforce word reading skills: find words that have more than one syllable, find words that begin or end with the same letter/sound, find words that have more than one meaning such as mix, roll, add

d) Ask the child to make a grocery list of items needed for the recipe. Newspaper advertisements can be used as a source for spelling as well as for preparing a budget.

MAKING BOOKS WITH CHILDREN Making individual or family-authored books is an activity even the youngest children can enjoy. Ideas contributed by the child are printed in sentence form by an adult. Pages of the book are illustrated with crayon, magazine pictures, photographs, etc.

a) Paper-fold Books: Cut a long strip of shelving paper or tape unmarked grocery bag strips together. Fold the strip in half, length-wise. Fold the entire strip as you would a paper fan. The result will be a booklet that contains several pages. Record a sentence or two on each page and ask the child to illustrate the page with art work.

b) Shape Books: Cut construction paper, writing-paper and drawing paper into a basic shape (apple, butterfly, car, turtle, or house) Each day the child can add a page of written work and a page of art work to the shape book. A "house" book, for example, could include a page on the child's name and address, one on members of the family, another on a poem about homes, etc.

Recording children's ideas in print helps them to discover the relationships that exist between oral and written language. Children should be encouraged to read their books to anyone who will listen! Pronounce difficult words for the child in order to ensure a positive experience in reading.

Parents need to provide many opportunities for summer enrichment. Recreational reading activities can be stimulating and enjoyable for the whole family. The key word is enjoyment. Creating and building a positive attitude toward learning may be one of the most valuable gifts a parent can bestow on his/her children.

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